

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

DRC-01 /091 W

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O R 021732Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5296

INFO SECDEF IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

CINCLANT

S E C R E T LONDON 12819

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR

SUBJECT: CARRIER TASK GROUP IN INDIAN OCEAN

REF: LONDON 12697

1. SIR GEOFFREY ARTHUR, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY SUPERVISING FCO'S DEFENCE DEPARTMENT, ASKED US TO CALL TODAY TO DISCUSS PRESENCE OF HANCOCK TASK GROUP IN INDIAN OCEAN. REFERRING TO THOMSON'S OCTOBER 31 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MISSION OF TASK GROUP (REFTEL), ARTHUR NOTED THAT USN HAD REQUESTED SERVICES OF RN OILER WHICH BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE. HE CONTINUED THAT BRITISH HAD HEARD ON THE "NAVY NET" THAT THE US WISHED TO USE DIEGO GARCIA FOR P-3 AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS, ADDING THAT BRITISH WERE AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER REQUESTS BY USG FOR USE OF BRITISH FACILITIES IN THE AREA.

2. ARTHUR NOTED THAT SUCH USE OF BRITISH BASE FACILITIES BY US FORCES WOULD REQUIRE POLITICAL

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CLEARANCE BY FOREIGN OFFICE WHICH WOULD APPROACH OUR

REQUESTS WITH "GOOD WILL." BUT QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED ABOUT WHAT THE TASK GROUP INTENDS TO DO IN THE INDIAN OCEAN; WILL IT ENTER THE PERSIAN GULF OR ADJACENT WATERS; WHAT CONNECTION IS THERE BETWEEN PRESENCE OF TASK GROUP AND MIDDLE EAST SITUATION? SUCH QUESTIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN ASKED BY LEVELS HIGHER THAN HIS OWN, ARTHUR SAID.

3. WE RESPONDED THAT WE HAD ASKED WASHINGTON FOR GUIDANCE AND WOULD DO SO IMMEDIATELY AGAIN.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) WHILE WE ARE COORDINATING CLOSELY WITH USNAVEUR, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF EMBASSY COULD HAVE FOR BACKGROUND MORE DETAILS ABOUT REQUESTS FOR USE OF BRITISH FACILITIES IN INDIAN OCEAN WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO BRITISH OR WHICH ARE CONTEMPLATED. (B) WE ALSO NEED GUIDANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS TO WHAT WE MAY TELL BRITISH ABOUT TASK GROUP'S MISSION. (COMMENT: WE NOTE FROM STATE 216206 THAT SECRETARY HAS DISCUSSED WITH INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY PRESENCE OF TASK GROUP IN INDIAN OCEAN.)

ANNENBERG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: mcintyresh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON12819
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731159/aaaabrcc.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LONDON 12697
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: mcintyresh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <12-Jul-2001 by boyleja, 3.4.X6, FGI, REFER TO DOD>; RELEASED <23-Jul-2001 by mcintyresh>; APPROVED <23-Jul-2001 by mcintyresh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CARRIER TASK GROUP IN INDIAN OCEAN
TAGS: MARR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005